

Greetings EPA we are so happy you are here, Welcome!

My name is Richard King. I am the tribal administrator for the Ekwok Village Council.

Just the other day Pebble filed a motion to intervene in OUR court case against the State of Alaska, the Department of Natural Resources's, Bristol Bay Area Plan. We say that DNR violates law by having a land use classification category for sport hunting and fishing, but none for subsistence hunting and fishing. Pebble is siding with DNR against our subsistence. Yet, Pebble and the State always say: Trust Us."

So, I would like to give you a quick snap shot of Ekwok Village Council's experience dealing with environmental issues concerning Pebble. We are a very vulnerable people. We live off of the fish & game that the Bristol Bay drainages provide. Pebble's location is in the very heart of the eco-system that keeps us alive.

Keep this in mind. "Trust Us" is what we have been told by Pebble concerning environmental issues on the Pebble Project. Then why do they change the subject to jobs?

Former Region 10 Director Mike Gearheard came to Ekwok a few years ago. He met most of the chiefs on this river. We ate, we talked, Mike listened and we danced. Yes Mike danced with us.

We took Mike up the Kaktuli River below the proposed Pebble Mine to see fish in one of our subsistence areas. I don't think Mike wanted to come to Alaska. I sort of "drove the bus over him" to get him to come, but when he left I bet he was glad he came. Thanks for coming EPA. We want to have a government-to-government relationship with you.

The Pebble people say they want to hear out concerns; every time we talk they change the subject to: “look at the jobs!” Trying to get us to turn our minds, off of the poison they will leave. Did they turn your meeting into JOBS R US?

It’s not if they pollute; its when. Every morning we will rise and ask: “did it break yet; is it leaking?”

The Pebble people told us there is no mine plan. What rich man do you know who would spend a nickel on something and not know what it is for. Pebble is stalling. They know its “game over” once they get their permit. They told us that the mine is not at the headwaters of Bristol Bay. They told us: “Trust Us.” But in court, they fight against our subsistence.

We attend the Alaska Forum on the Environment in Anchorage every year. This year the Pebble presentation given by John Shively was with the State of Alaska. They said they would only take questions in writing. They made us write them down! They screened our questions and allowed very little time, controlling the meeting. Did they control your meeting? The State and Pebble are burning the clock. They know its “game over” once they get permitted. “Trust Us,” they say. But in court, they fight against our subsistence.

I would ask EPA and the US Government to help the Tribes in the Bristol Bay drainges, because we are not recognized by the State or Pebble. We were here first and have lived here the longest. The state will not recognize or protect our subsistence rights. The State and Pebble have partnered to push this project and ruin the only place left in America that is truly pristine and wild. The Brits are going to ruin another wonderful place in America. What we have here is special. We need your help. We can’t trust DNR, We can’t trust the State.

We can't trust Pebble. They fight against our subsistence rights. We are extremely vulnerable and they know it just another job for them. Please EPA, initiate 404c before all these mining permits, for Pebble and similar mines, get granted. Please protect our pristine environment.